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#6
Dr. James

A
Dissertation
on
Cholera Morbus

By Charles Garrison
of
New Jersey.

November 10th 1821

No 230 Spruce St

Mrs. M. A. Bailey }

admitted March 12th 1822

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Cholera Morbus

Cholera is derived from the Greek words
χολη bile and, πορ a flux.

It has been called, diarrhoea cholericas;
fletifluis passio and by some of the ancients
holera. Dr Rush calls it "the intestinal state of
fever." Others have thought it the Billious fever
of the season turned in upon the bowels: & this
I think quite probable as it frequently appears
at the same season and is cured by remedies of
the same description. This disease is placed by Cullen

October 1870

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Dr. Chapman places it among the diseases of the digestive system.

The stomach is one of the most important organs of the human body. Situated in the very center of the system it rules, as it were with an iron scepter; no part of our frame is exempt from its influence, the liver, the uterus, and the brain in particular, are very closely connected with it. Many of the diseases, which the ancients supposed to originate in other parts, we now believe to have their origin in the stomach; as, gout, hysteria &c.

It was formerly supposed that Cholera Morbus originated in the Liver, and that the disease depended on an increased secretion of bile of a nature more acrid than usual, thus producing the violent commotions of the stomach and intestines, which take place in this disease, but I believe it is generally conceived, that Cholera Morbus is primarily of gastric origin & that the augmented

secretion of bile follows, in consequence of the sympathy existing between the stomach and hepatic system. Our reasons for believing this disease to originate in the stomach are,

1st. Because the evacuations at the commencement of this disease are merely the contents of the stomach, and that bilious discharges do not take place until the liver becomes sympathetically affected.

2nd Cholera Morbus proceeds from the same causes, which produce other diseases of the stomach, as acrid poisons, low lying, unripe fruits, debauchery, and cold applied either to the extremities or surface,

3rd. The remedies most successful in treating this disease are those we find most useful in treating other gastric affections.

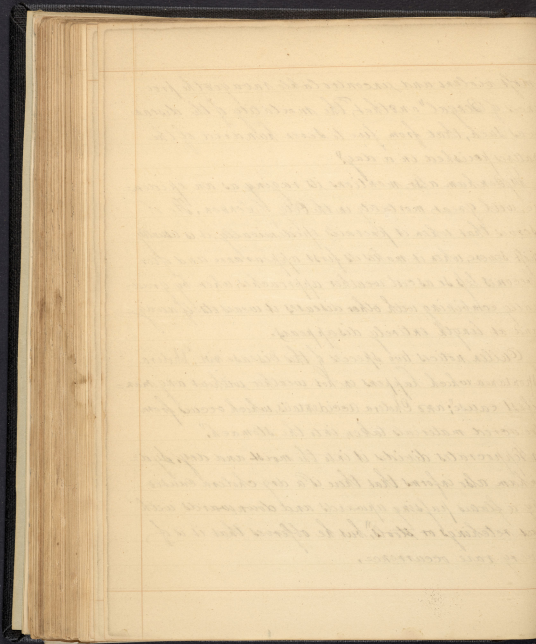
Nor is it probable that the acrimony of the bile is any greater in this, than in any other disease, as it is discharged before it has time to acquire any

most violent and uncontrollable ravaged the provinces of Bengal and that, the mortality of the disease was such, that from five to seven hundred of the natives perished in a day.

Sydenham also mentions its raging as an epidemic, with great mortality in the City of London. He observes that when it prevails epidemically, it is usually most severe, when it makes its first appearance and often becomes less as cool weather approaches, when by gradually combining with other diseases, it wears itself away and at length entirely disappears.

Cullen notices two species of this disease viz, "Cholera Spontanea which happens in hot weather without any manifest cause; and Cholera accidentalis, which occurs from too acrid materials taken into the stomach."

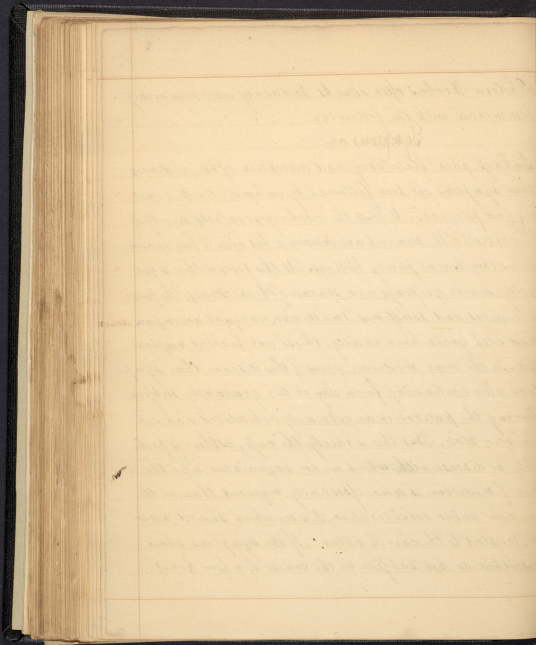
Hippocrates divides it into the moist and dry, Sydenham also informs that there is a dry cholera caused by a flatus passing upwards and downwards with "out retchings or stools," but he observes that it is of very rare occurrence.



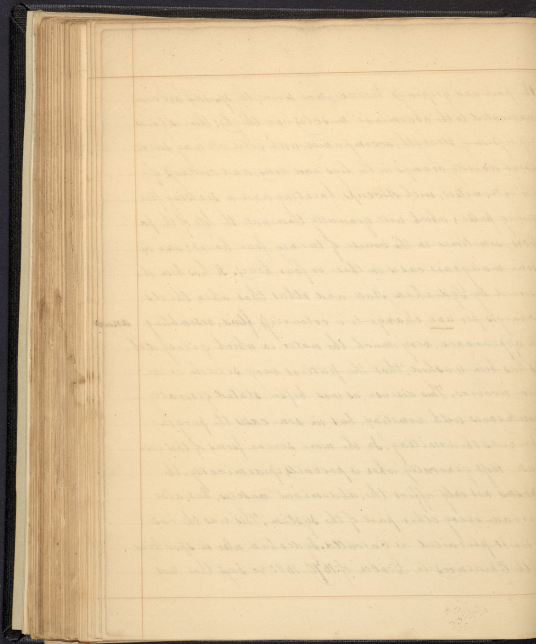
Cholera Morbus often attacks suddeny and commonly commences with the following

Symptoms are

Sickness, pain, flatulency and distention of the abdomen these symptoms are soon followed by an immoderate vomiting and purging. At first the discharges consist merely of the contents of the stomach and intestines, but after a few evacuations they become purely bilious. At this period there is generally, severe gripings and spasms of the intestines, the pulse is frequent, and sometimes small and unequal, accompanied with great heat, anxiety, thirst and hurried respiration. In the more moderate forms of this disease, these symptoms after continuing for a day or two gradually subside leaving the patient in an extremely debilitated and exhausted state. But this is rarely the case, as there is probably no disease ~~with~~ which we are acquainted, ^{to} where the aid of medicine is more essentially required than in the one now under consideration. It is one which should never be trusted to the care of nature. If the symptoms above described do not subside in the course of a few hours:

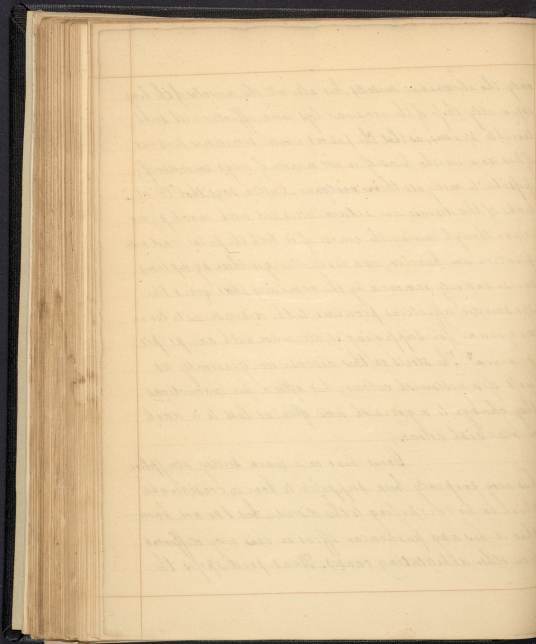


the pain and gripings become more severe, the spasms are communicated to the abdominal muscles and thighs: there is great depression of strength, accompanied, with cold clammy sweats, great anxiety, cramps in the legs and arms, and coldness of the extremities, with Hiccups, fainting and a sinking fluttering pulse, which will generally terminate the life of the patient, sometimes in the course of twenty four hours: and in some malignant cases in three or four hours. It has been observed by Sydenham, Hall and others, that when the discharge per ano, change to a colourless fluid, resembling anum in appearance, very much, the water in which greasy dishes has been washed, that the patient very seldom or never recovers. This disease, as was before stated, generally commences with vomiting, but in some cases the purging precedes the vomiting. In the more severe forms of this disease most generally, when it prevails epidemically, the spasms not only affect the abdominal muscles, but also pervade every other part of the system. This was the case when it prevailed at Calcutta. Sydenham also in speaking of the Epidemics in London of 1679, 1685, &c. says that not



only the abdominal muscles, but also all the muscles of the body especially those of the arms and legs were affected with such terrible spasms, as that the patient would sometimes leap out of bed and writhe himself in all manner of ways in order if possible to mitigate their violence. Cullen says, that the attacks of this disease are seldom attended with much pyrexia and though during the course of it both the pulse and respiration are hurried and irregular yet these symptoms are so entirely removed by the remedies that quiet the spasmodic affections peculiar to the disease as to leave no ground for supposing it attended with any proper pyrexia. The stools in this disease are generally at first of a yellowish colour, but after a few evacuations they change to a greenish and often at last to a dark or blackish colour.

Great heat or a warm sultry atmosphere has very properly been supposed to have a considerable share in predisposing to this disease, but I do not know that it has any particular effect in this way different from other debilitating causes. Heat predisposes the



acid properties; some even affirm that it is more bland than in health.

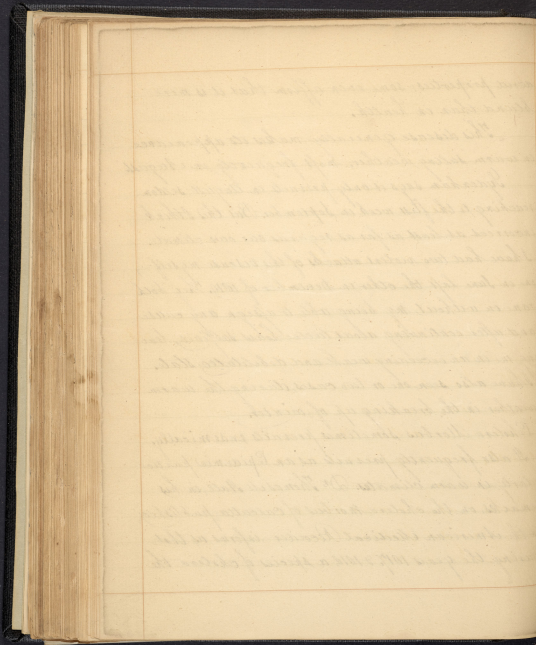
This disease generally makes its appearance in warm sailing weather, most frequently in August. Sydenham says it only prevails in August seldom reaching to the first week in September. But this I think incorrect at least as far as regards our own climate.

I have had two violent attacks of this disease myself, one in June last the other in December of 1810. They both came on without my being able to assign any cause and after continuing about twelve hours subsided, leaving me in an exceeding weak and debilitated state.

I have also seen one or two cases, during the warm weather in the breaking up of winter.

Cholera Morbus sometimes prevails endemically.

It also frequently prevails as an Epidemic particularly in warm climates. Dr. Thomas de Hale, in his remarks, on the cholera morbus of Calcutta published in the American Medical Recorder, informs us that "during the years 1817 & 1818, a species of cholera the



body to the action of stimuli and may thus be considered a cause of Cholera Morbus. When the body greatly debilitated, from excessive fatigue in warm weather is suddenly exposed to a draught of cold air, it is then highly susceptible to the action of stimuli.

The causes which act more immediately in producing this disease are,

1st Improper aliment - as the immoderate use of water fruits &c. Dr. Chapman in Lecturing on this disease informs us of a case which arose from eating water melons at noon, and all that medicine was able to do, could not prevent a fatal issue before night.

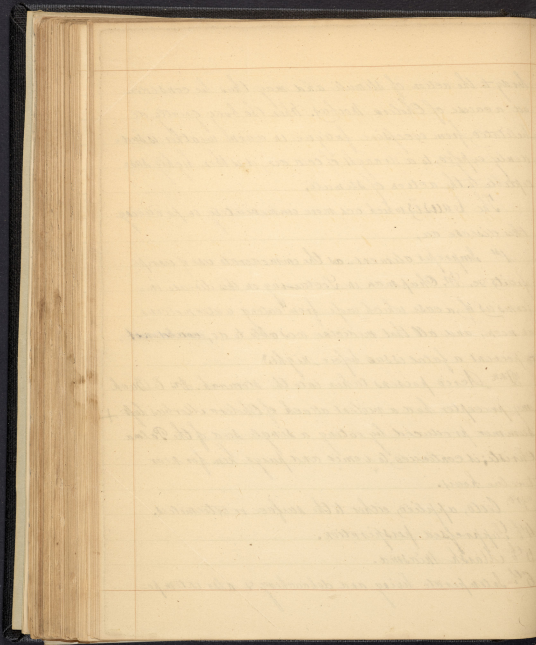
2nd Acrid poisons taken into the stomach. Dr. E. Buck my preceptor had a violent attack of Cholera Morbus last summer produced by eating a single seed of the Palma Christi; it continued to vomit and purge him for near twelve hours.

3rd Cold, applied either to the surface or extremities.

4th Suppressed perspiration.

5th Marsh miasma.

6th Intemperate living and debauchery & also intemper-



=rate paroxysms of passion.

7th. Over distention of the stomach, by taking food in too large quantities at a time. This I believe is frequently the cause of the disease. Dr Hall in speaking of the Cholera Morbus of Calcutta informs us that the natives use large quantities of rice, consuming almost incredible quantities at a time; and that they were generally attacked with this disease after eating a full meal of this article. Whether this article has any particular effect in producing this disease is more than I am able to determine. Dr Hall thinks not. I have a brother who cannot eat more than half a dozen spoonfuls of this article without producing this disease. It has always affected him thus from his earliest infancy.

In a debilitated and consequently excitable state of the stomach it only requires the action of stimuli to form the disease under consideration, and this may arise from their being remotely or more immediately applied. As was before observed there is probably no disease with which we are acquainted in which the assistance of a physician is more essentially requisite than in the one we are now consid-

Anodyne in great pain 2

ering. It is a disease which is quickly violent in its ac-
-tion and therefore requiring prompt and active remedies. The
great nausea & other distressing symptoms, most generally
induce attendants & sometimes medical men to adopt the ha-
-mame plan of affording immediate relief by the exhibition of pow-
-erful anodyne medicines. That it is sometimes necessary to
-administer anodynes before evacuates. I think there is no
doubt; but as the disease generally presents itself I think
this practice incorrect & that although it may momen-
-tarily quiet the insidious enemy it is only calcula-
-ted to protract the contest until she can gain new
vigour to renew the attack with greater violence.

Having premised these observations I shall proceed to
the most important part under consideration viz

The Treatment

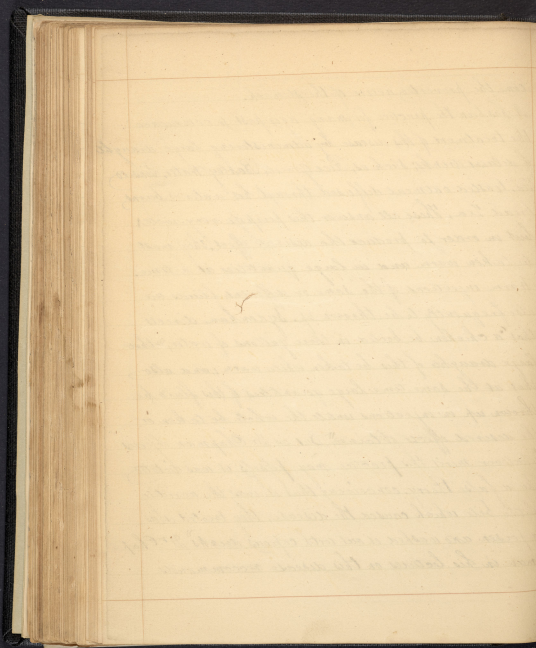
Calico, in the commencement of this disease the two prin-
-cipal indications to be attended to are

1st To evacuate the contents of the stomach; and thus throw
out the offending matter.

2nd To calm the irritation: check the spasms: and over-

= come the proverting action of the stomach.

It has been the practice for many ages past to commence the treatment of this disease by administering large draughts of diluent drinks; such as, Rice gruel, Barley water, Linseed Tea, toasted oatmeal diffused through hot water & burnt bread Tea, These all answer this purpose very well; but in order to produce the desired effect, they must be taken warm and in large quantities at a time. Warm injections of the same or different fluids are also frequently to be thrown up. Sydenham directs that "a chicken be boiled in three gallons of water, & that large draughts of this be taken while warm; and also that at the same time large quantities of this fluid be thrown up in injections until the whole be taken or the desired effects obtained." But as Dr Chapman observes "whatever merits this practice may possess it was dictated by a false theory, conceiving that it was the acridity of the bile which caused the disease, they treated it as a poison and washed it out with copious drinks" Dr Chapman in his lectures on this disease recommends



when evacuations are required, that we should give
Emetics instead of drenching the stomach with warm
drinks and of these the best is Spicacoen, it is to be given
in doses of 15 or 20 grains followed by the ordinary
drinks to promote its operation.

I had an opportunity during the last summer of wit-
nessing in several instances the good effects of this plan
of treatment, I think it in most cases equally safe & much
more quick and efficacious in its action than the former
method.

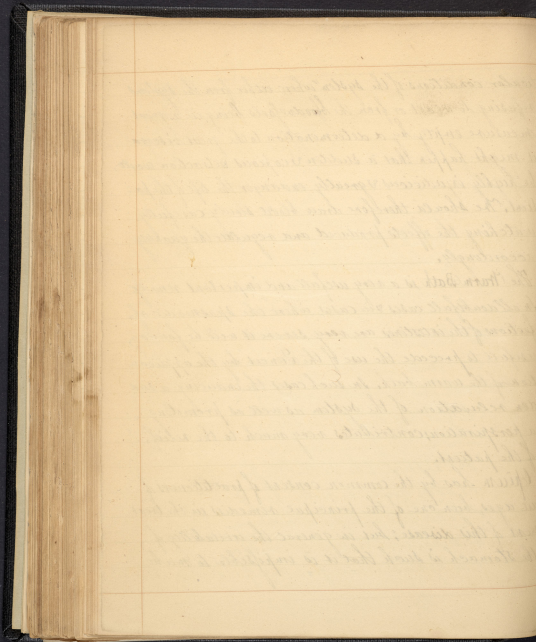
This being done the next indication is to check
the violent commotions, &c

To fulfill this indication various remedies have
been employed but the best is the Lancet. This is to
be used more or less freely according to the state of the
system. Dr. Chapman tells us that "the pulse here must
not be our only guide no matter how feeble it may be
yet if the patient be possessed of ordinary vigour the
Lancet must be used to some extent". But he goes on
to caution us against the too free use of it in some par-

ticular conditions of the system where either from the system refusing to react or from the bloodvessels being in a great measure empty by a determination to the great viscera it might happen that a sudden & copious detraction would be highly injudicious & greatly endanger the life of the patient. We should therefore draw blood slowly carefully watching the effects produced and regulate the quantity accordingly.

The Warm Bath is a very usefull and important remedy. In all doubtfull cases & in cases where the spasmodic affections of the intestines are very severe it will be found usefull to precede the use of the Tincture by the application of the warm bath. In such cases the inducing a sudden relaxation of the system as well as promoting a perspiration, contributes very much to the relief of the patient.

Opium has by the common consent of practitioners of all ages, been one of the principall remedies in the treatment of this disease; but in general the irritability of the stomach is such that it is impossible to make



the patients retain it; and it should therefore be given in the form of an enema; these may be repeated every three or four hours according to circumstances,

When opium is given by the mouth it should be in the solid form and in doses of half a grain every half dozen, or hour.

Cataplasms of opium and camphor applied to the region of the stomach are said sometimes to prove beneficial.

Warm fomentations to the Epigastric region are always very useful, to relieve the pain and allay the irritation of the stomach; the best of these is the bag of cloves.

Fannels wet in warm spirits or brandy & applied to the abdomen are always very agreeable to the patient, and frequently afford immediate relief; by using this application frequently and as warm as it can be borne permanent advantage is sometimes obtained. Of a careful and judicious application of the remedies already mentioned, I believe that the disease, if taken in its com-

menstruation generally may be arrested in its progress and made to yield to our remedies. But should it still continue, we must not yet be discouraged, the opium may be given in larger doses and in shorter intervals.

A large Blister applied over the region of the stomach will sometimes stop the vomiting when all other means have failed.

Limewater or milk also frequently answer this purpose very well; it may be taken in doses of a table spoonfull and repeated at short intervals.

It is said that the West Indian practitioners, use large doses of diluted sulphuric acid, to calm the irritation of the stomach and that it sometimes fulfils this indication even better than opium.

Nitric Acid, diluted, and in small doses is occasionally made use of for the same purpose.

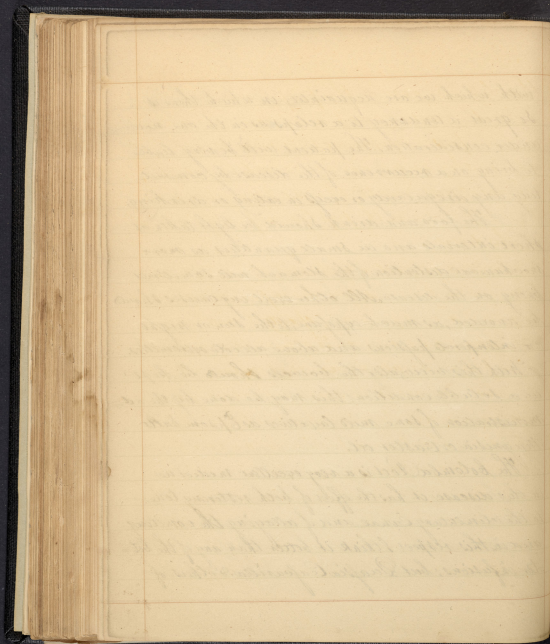
If the patient be very much exhausted, and a tendency to sink manifested, Blisters or Sinapisms should be applied, to the extremities and the spirits of Turpentine taken internally. There is probably no disease

with which we are acquainted in which there is
so great a tendency to a relapse as in the one now
under consideration. The patient will be very liable
to bring on a recurrence of the disease by commit-
ting any irregularity or excess in eating or drinking.

The food and drink should be light taken at
short intervals and in small quantities as more
mechanical distention of the stomach will sometimes
bring on the disease. All other exciting causes should
be avoided, as much exposure to the sun or night
air intemperate passions and above all cold extremities.

With this view also the bowels should be kept
in a soluble condition this may be done by the ad-
ministration of some mild laxatives as Epsom Salt
Magnesia or Castor oil.

The Colomba Root is a very excellent medicine
in this disease it has the effect of both restoring tone
to the alimentary canal and of allaying the vomiting
and in this respect I think it better than any of the bit-
ter infusions; but Quassia Caparilla & others of



this cloth also answer this purpose very well.

After the vomiting and purging have abated, a flannel roller passed comfortably tight round the abdomen is found very useful and agreeable to the patient.

Flannel worn next the skin is a remedy that is never to be overlooked in the prophylactic plan of treatment in this disease.

The great prostration of strength that early takes place in this disease is often accompanied with much anxiety of mind, depression of spirits, and an abandonment of the hopes of recovery. To remove these fears as far as possible should require our constant attention.

We must here act in the doable capacity of physician and friend. And here it is that the feelings of humanity should in a particular manner be roused into sympathy.

